

# Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council

700 2nd Ave Ste 101 | Des Moines, Iowa 50309



**IOWA DD Council**  
Preparation, Participation, Power

**infoNET**

**The DD Council will work to create change with and for persons with developmental disabilities so they can live, work, learn and play in the community of their choosing.**

Our purpose is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity and integration and inclusion in all parts of community life. We achieve this through engaging in advocacy, capacity building and system change activities.

We envision an Iowa where all people with developmental disabilities and their families are fully included in communities they chose.

**IOWA DD**Council

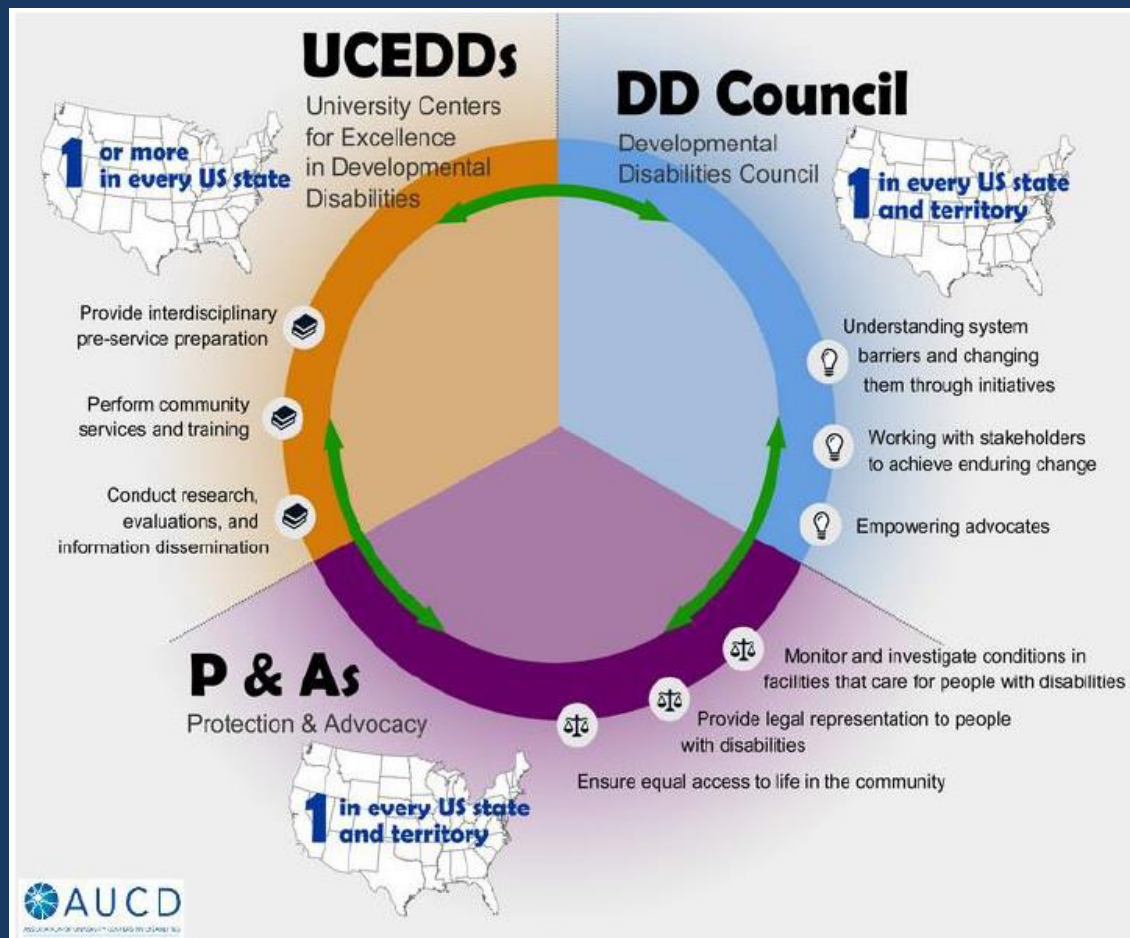
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# What is the Developmental Disability (DD) Assistance and Bill of Rights Act?

- The DD Act of 2000 Public Law 106-402 established a set of programs to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities through **capacity building** and **systems change, advocacy** and the enforcement and protection of civil rights.
- These programs are the state DD Councils, Disability Rights Centers (Disability Rights Iowa) and the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities ( Center for Disabilities and Development )- sometimes called the DD Network.
- Funding and oversight for these programs comes from the Federal Agency of Administration for Community living (ACL).

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# Iowa DD Council Staff



**Brooke Lovelace**  
*Executive Director*



**Bill Kallestad**  
*Public Policy Manager*



**Lindsay Leonetti**  
*Administrative Assistant*

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# Our Council Members

24 members appointed by the governor

- 60% people with DD or family members
- Mandated state agency representatives
  - DRI
  - CDD
  - Dept. Education
  - Dept. Aging
  - Child Health Specialists Clinics
  - VR
  - IME
  - County/local reps
  - Providers



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# A PLAN 2022 - 2026 FOR PROGRESS

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# IOWA DD Council

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THE IOWA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL BELIEVES ALL IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILIES, SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY CHOOSE TO LIVE.

TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION, WE WORK WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES TO GIVE THEM A VOICE ABOUT THE TYPES OF SUPPORTS THEY NEED AND MAKE SURE THEY RECEIVE THESE SUPPORTS.

OUR WORK INCLUDES ADVOCACY, POLICY IMPROVEMENTS, AND EFFORTS TO MAKE THE COMMUNITY STRONGER. WE CREATED A STATEWIDE NETWORK OF ADVOCATES CALLED IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES IN ACTION TO HELP US REACH OUR VISION. TOGETHER, OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WE PLAN TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGHOUT IOWA.







# OUR MISSION

TO CREATE CHANGE WITH AND FOR IOWANS  
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SO THEY  
CAN LIVE, WORK, LEARN, AND PLAY IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF THEIR CHOOSING



**9400<sup>+</sup>** IOWANS MAKE UP THE IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES IN ACTION NETWORK



# DEVELOP STRONG ADVOCATES & LEADERS WHO CREATE THE CHANGE THEY WANT

## OBJECTIVE 1

Annually increase the number of Iowans with disabilities and family members who engage in the civic and political decision-making process.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Annually increase the number of Iowans with disabilities—including young adults and their family members—who lead and mentor others and take on leadership roles in projects that increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in community living.

## OBJECTIVE 3

By 2026, increase the number of Iowans with disabilities who successfully advocate for their own health care needs.



# OBJECTIVE 1

Annually increase the number of Iowans with disabilities and family members who engage in the civic and political decision-making process.



## OUR PLAN

1. Host local Capitol days and town hall meetings.
2. Provide advocacy trainings and advertise our ability to offer this assistance.
3. Provide voter trainings and advertise that we can offer this to both community and facility sites.
4. Host and support Make Your Mark! and other self and family advocacy conferences.
5. Educate and inform the public through infoNET, social media posts, and emails.
6. Increase the number of advocates connected to the Iowans with Disabilities in Action network.

*“It was encouraging to be reminded individuals with disabilities can navigate their own lives and make their own choices when the needed supports are in place.”*

*“Attending the MYM! Conference made me realize the everyone can be a leader, you just need to find your opportunity.”*



## OBJECTIVE 2

Annually increase the number of Iowans with disabilities—including young adults and their family members—who lead and mentor others and take on leadership roles in projects that increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in community living.



### OUR PLAN

1. Prepare self-advocates to train others to register to vote and vote.
2. Support self and family advocates, and Council members by hosting town hall meetings and other public events with local and state leaders in their communities.
3. Support peer mentoring programs such as Community Ambassadors.
4. Support the mentoring program in the talent bank to increase the number of people with disabilities on boards and commissions.
5. Host outreach and awareness campaigns about opportunities available on commissions and boards at the local and state level.
6. Create an intern position within Iowans with Disabilities in Action for a person with a disability to assist with training and projects. Work with Realizing Educational and Career Hopes (REACH), Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), and VR.
7. Continue partnerships to provide the Youth Leadership Academy.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*(Continued...)*



8. Work with Developmental Disabilities (DD) network partners (including CDD and Child Health Specialty Clinics) to develop youth councils at the local level.
9. Work with DD network to train and mentor people with disabilities on how to be effective members of boards, councils, and commissions.
10. Work with boards, councils, and commissions to share ways they can be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

**120+ ADVOCATES**  
in our network reported that  
Iowans with Disabilities in  
Action helped them encourage  
another person to register,  
vote, or get involved in the  
election process.



## OBJECTIVE 3

By 2026, increase the number of Iowans with disabilities who successfully advocate for their own health care needs.



### OUR PLAN

1. With the DD network and other state partners, develop a resource toolkit to provide health and health care advocacy education for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those supporting them.
2. Work with the Special Health Care Needs advisory group to educate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) workers.

# IMPROVE POLICY & PRACTICE THAT POSITIVELY IMPACTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## OBJECTIVE 1

Annually, target at least three key policy proposals (e.g. legislation, executive orders, or regulations being announced) to identify opportunities to educate policymakers about the impact of specific policies and make recommendations to ensure policies align with the principles of the Developmental Disabilities Act and the legislative priorities of Council members.

## OBJECTIVE 2

With the use of DD Council resources, people with disabilities and/or their family members will annually propose new legislation and/or policy changes or improvements about an issue important to them.





# OBJECTIVE 1

Annually, target at least three key policy proposals (e.g. legislation, executive orders, or regulations being announced) to identify opportunities to educate policymakers about the impact of specific policies and make recommendations to ensure policies align with the principles of the Developmental Disabilities Act and the legislative priorities of Council members.



## OUR PLAN

1. Research state and federal public policies and trends.
2. Facilitate strong relationships with community organizations.
3. Collaborate with DD network partners (Disability Rights Iowa and the Center for Disabilities and Development) to identify issues and needs.
4. Foster relationships with policymakers to influence policy.
5. Participate and provide public comment in commissions and council meetings (Mental Health Disability Services, Medical Assistance Advisory Council, the Autism Council, the Brain Injury Council, and the Olmstead Task Force).



6. With Council members and DD network partners, develop an annual list of policy priorities that increase community living for people with disabilities.
7. Educate policymakers and other state leaders about the importance of gathering input from people with disabilities and sharing information in plain language.



## OBJECTIVE 2

With the use of DD Council resources, people with disabilities and/or their family members will annually propose new legislation and/or policy changes or improvements about an issue important to them.



### OUR PLAN

1. Use infoNET to inform Iowans with disabilities and their families about policies that impact community living and inclusion.
2. Share grassroots success stories of people advocating for themselves locally and at the state and federal levels.
3. Support and collaborate with the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute to help families advocate for themselves and others.
4. Host regular (at least monthly) policy calls with advocates and stakeholders during the legislative session for discussion and questions about proposed legislation.

infoNET

4200+

IOWANS  
RECEIVE INFONET

# STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## OBJECTIVE 1

Through annual training, technical assistance, and resources, the DD Council will collaborate the DD network, state agencies, and community programs to improve competitive employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

## OBJECTIVE 2

By September 30, 2026, the DD Council will partner with the DD network, state agencies, and/or other community programs to invest in at least two projects to demonstrate new approaches to direct services, enhance systems, respond to emergent issues, or eliminate barriers to access and use of community services (such as transportation, housing, assistive technology, health, education, and emergency preparation).

## OBJECTIVE 3 (TARGETED DISPARITY)

By 2026, in collaboration with our DD network partners and the Iowa Department of Human Rights, the DD Council will develop relationships with underserved populations (African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians) in rural areas of Iowa to increase the number of people who are aware of the Council, use the Council resources, and participate in Council activities.



# OBJECTIVE 1

Through annual training, technical assistance, and resources, the DD Council will collaborate the DD network, state agencies, and community programs to improve competitive employment outcomes for people with disabilities.



## OUR PLAN

1. Partner with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, the Iowa Coalition on Integrated Employment, and our DD network to provide training opportunities to community rehabilitation providers.
2. Through infoNET and Iowans with Disabilities in Action, promote National Disabilities Awareness Month with various activities with local and state officials and legislators.
3. Share employment success stories.
4. Sponsor and collaborate with DD partners (the Autism Society, Association of People Supporting Employment First, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, and others) to host employment-specific conferences for people with disabilities and their families.



*"I get a lot of information from infoNET resources to share with my legislators. It's also important to continue urging and inspiring persons with developmental disabilities to take action and become more involved."*





## OBJECTIVE 2

By September 30, 2026, the DD Council will partner with the DD network, state agencies, and/or other community programs to invest in at least two projects to demonstrate new approaches to direct services, enhance systems, respond to emergent issues, or eliminate barriers to access and use of community services (such as transportation, housing, assistive technology, health, education, and emergency preparation).



### OUR PLAN

1. Work with community partners to host community conversations to determine emergency issues that could be addressed through new initiatives.
2. Develop and communicate informational briefs on lessons learned.

## OBJECTIVE 3 (TARGETED DISPARITY)

By 2026, in collaboration with our DD network partners and the Iowa Department of Human Rights, the DD Council will develop relationships with underserved populations (African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians) in rural areas of Iowa to increase the number of people who are aware of the Council, use the Council resources, and participate in Council activities.



### OUR PLAN

1. With the assistance of Council members, seek out opportunities in Council members' communities to host and/or sponsor community conversations and awareness initiatives.
2. Partner with the Department of Human Rights to host events in other rural communities.
3. Continue to engage and sustain relationships developed.





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If you would like to provide feedback about our plan,  
please contact us by email at [stateplan@iowaddcouncil.org](mailto:stateplan@iowaddcouncil.org)  
or by phone at 800-452-1936.

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